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FAR FROM THE WORLD WE KNOW, IN A REALM WHERE MILKY OCEANS BOIL INTO THE SKY AND GOLDEN FORESTS BURN COLDLY AS THEY DREAM, AND THERE IS NO MORNING--
-- IN A REALM WHERE DEATH IS STILL A HORROR, THE RULER OF THAT REALM IS DYING.
ALL HAS BEEN TRIED, O IURMALE, TO NO AVAIL. THE GATE TO THE WORLD WHERE SALVATION LIES IS BARRED, AND THE TIME IS NEARLY GONE.
NEARLY--BUT NOT QUITE, COUNSELOR. I HAVE AT LAST SENSED ONE WHO MAY BE MY LIFE.
AND BEHOLD! HE IS CALLED--DR. BERENSON.
Stan Lee presents
WHAT SONG THE SIRENS SANG!

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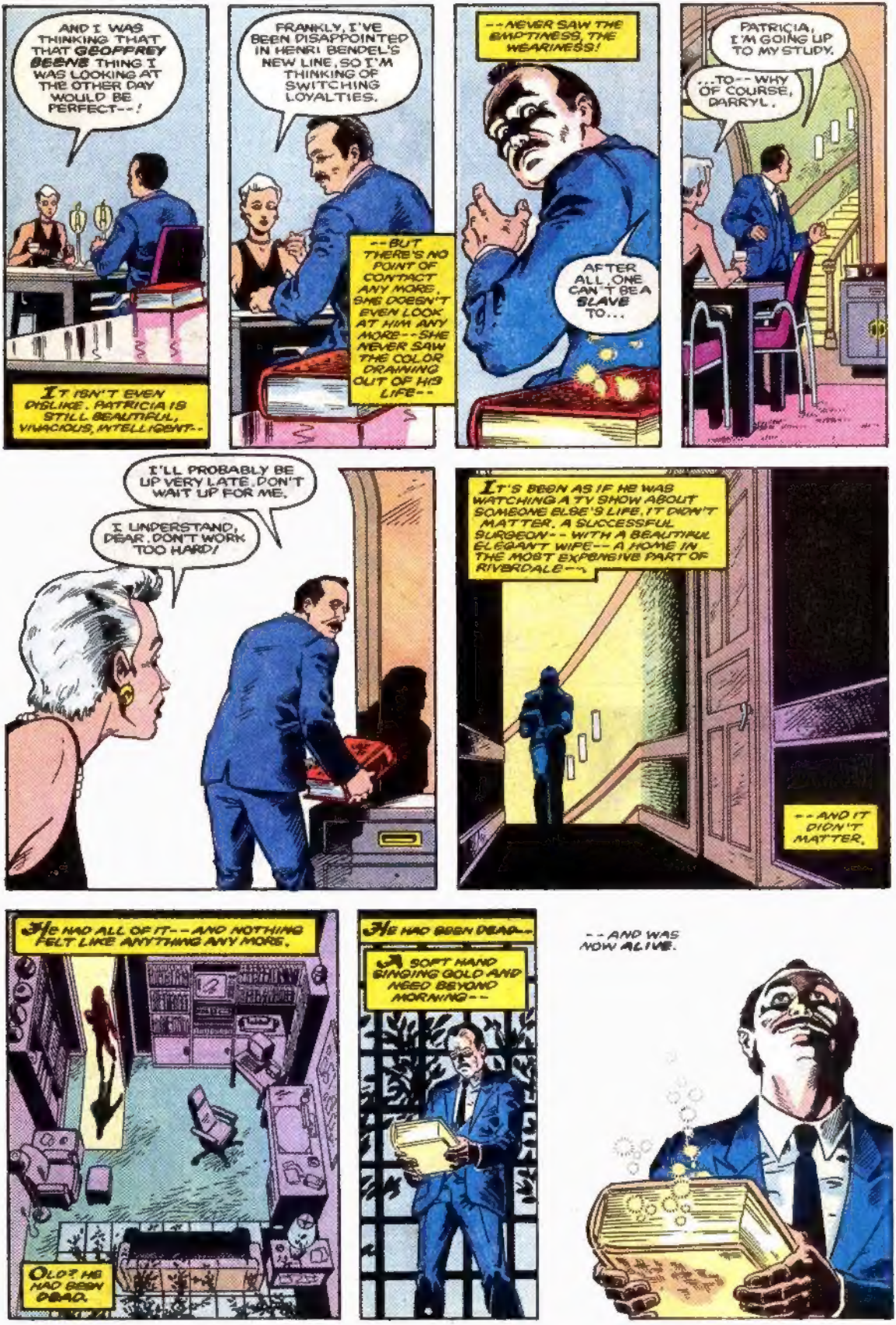
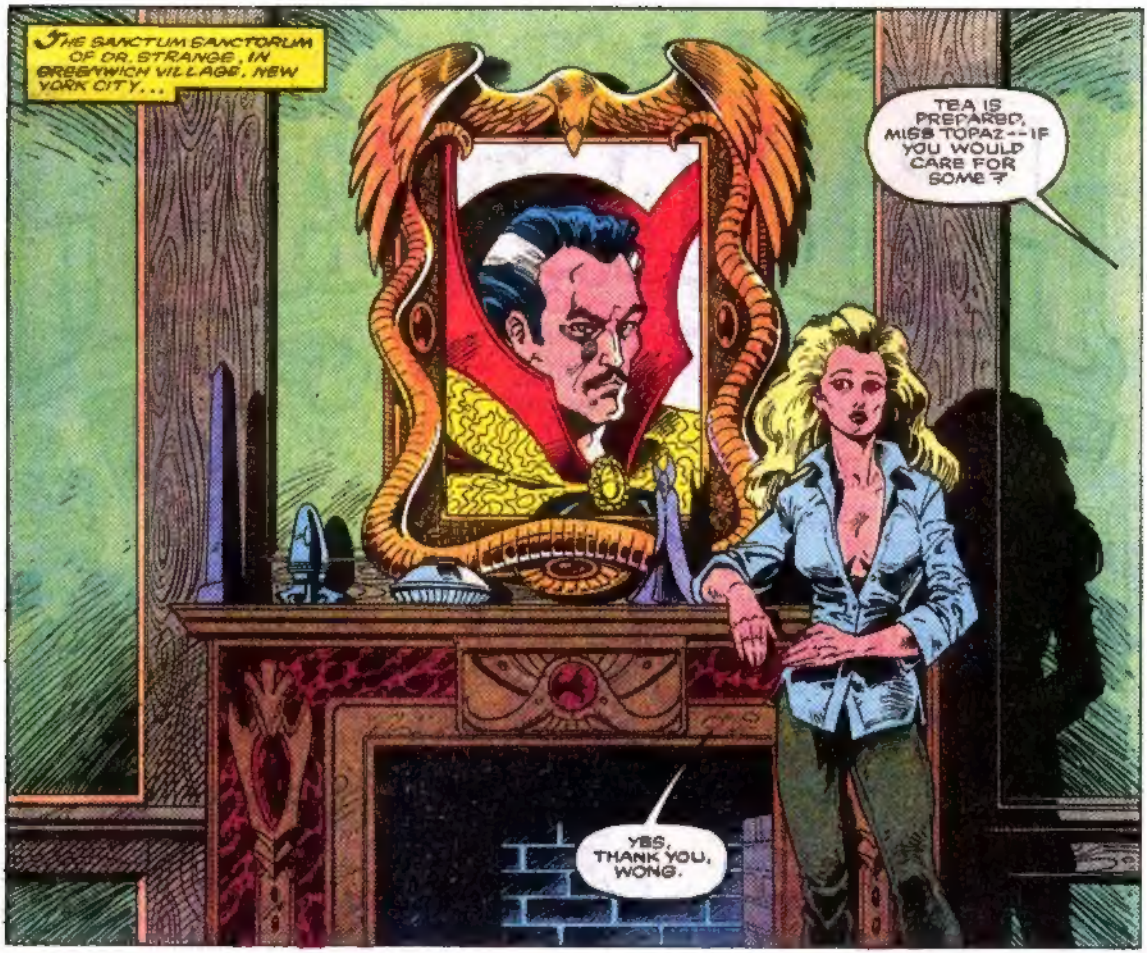
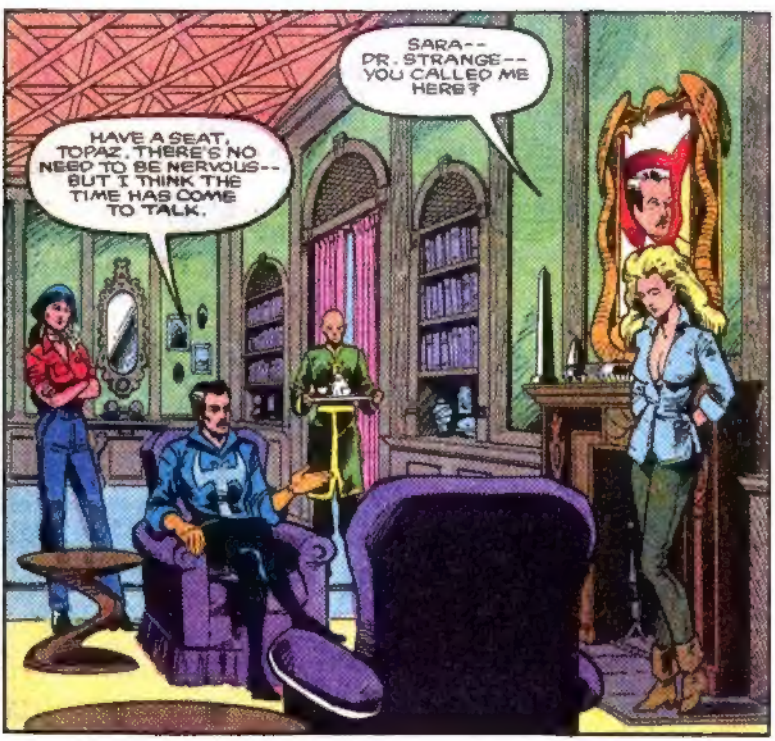
DR. BERENSON, I WAS SO WORRIED! IS MY HUSBAND--?
--GOING TO BE PERFECTLY FINE, MRS. DeGRAF. THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN THANK YOU--!
YES, WELL THERE IS SOMETHING...
...IF YOU WOULD PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY? THEY REALLY ARE TERRIBLE ABOUT YOUR PAYMENTS--!
HE IS THE ONE. HE WILL ANSWER THE CALL.
HE WILL OPEN THE GATE. BUT FIRST HE MUST BE LED TO IT. AND THOUGH IT MAY TAKE A GREAT PART OF MY REMAINING POWERS--
"-- I WILL GUIDE HIM HITHER!"
DARRYL BERENSON HAS LONG SINCE STOPPED LOOKING AT ANYTHING ON THE WALK TO HIS GARAGE.
THUS IT IS A LONG TIME BEFORE HE SEES THE PHANTOM GOLDEN SNAKES ABOVE HIM THAT ARE SENSED BY HIS EYES ALONE.
HE HEARS THEM SING TO HIM.
AND THE SONG IS BEAUTIFUL, AND LEADS HIM ONWARD IN HOPE AND JOY--
BOOKS
-- THE WAY THE FUTURE DID WHEN HE WAS YOUNG.
EVENING, SIR. CAN I HELP--
CHECK BAGS AT COUNTER
THERE IS THE PROMISE OF A SECRET, A SECRET THAT WILL NOT DISAPPOINT THE WAY LOVE AND WEALTH AND POWER DISAPPOINTED-- A SECRET CONTAINED--
--HERE!

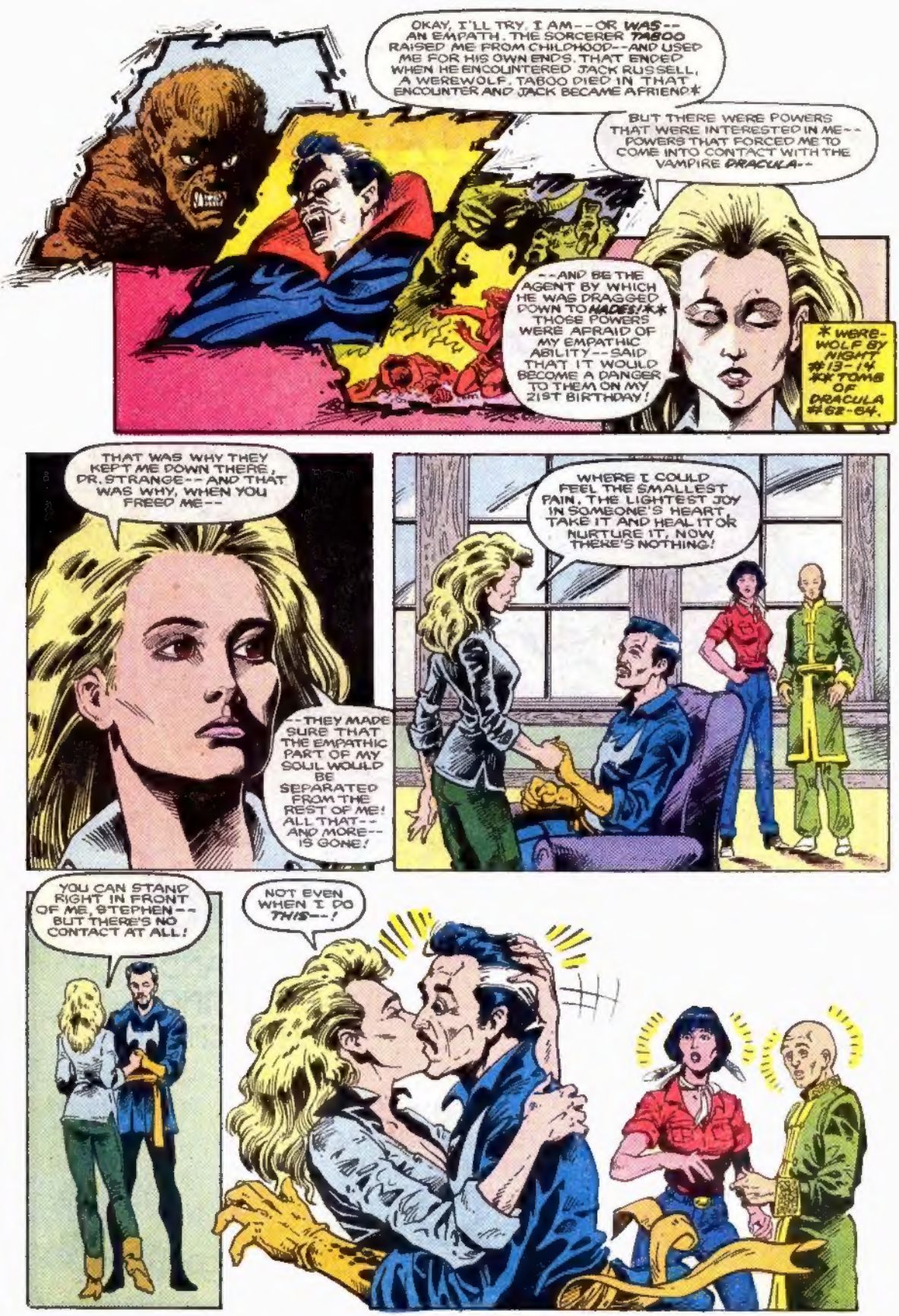
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN PARTICULAR?
I WANT THIS SONG--- I MEAN, THIS BOOK HERE. YES.
ARE YOU-- SURE, SIR?
TOUCHING IT, THERE ARE GOLDEN DREAMING FORESTS COOLLY AFIRE.
YES, THIS IS IT. I'LL TAKE IT!
IT'S NOT INEXPENSIVE, SIR--!
IT DOESN'T MATTER, I'LL TAKE IT.
WELL, NO ONE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT LANGUAGE IT IS -- STILL, IT'S VERY OLD--
HOW MUCH?
WELL, NOT FOR UNDER-- $300?
DONE!
THEY SING TO HIM, AND HE IS GOLDEN.
HOW DID HE GET SO OLD BEFORE THIS MOMENT?
DARRYL! THANK GOODNESS! THE COOK THREW A FIT WHEN I TOLD HIM TO HOLD DINNER, AFTER YOU CALLED SAYING YOU'D BE DELAYED-- BUT EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL!
HELLO, PATRICIA, DEAR.
HOW COULD HE HAVE FELT NOTHING FOR SO LONG?
SORRY I'M LATE.
HOW COULD LOVE HAVE DIED INTO THIS?
DARRYL DEAR, YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PARTY DOWN AT THE YACHT CLUB? I WAS THINKING YOU SHOULD BRING THAT NICE NEW RESIDENT FROM THE HOSPITAL--!


AND I WAS THINKING THAT THAT GEOFFREY BEENE THING I WAS LOOKING AT THE OTHER DAY WOULD BE PERFECT--!
IT ISN'T EVEN DISLIKE. PATRICIA IS STILL BEAUTIFUL, VIVACIOUS, INTELLIGENT--
FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN HENRI BENDEL'S NEW LINE, SO I'M THINKING OF SWITCHING LOYALTIES.
--BUT THERE'S NO POINT OF CONTACT ANY MORE. SHE DOESN'T EVEN LOOK AT HIM ANY MORE--SHE NEVER SAW THE COLOR DRAINING OUT OF HIS LIFE--
--NEVER SAW THE EMPTINESS, THE WEARINESS!
AFTER ALL, ONE CAN'T BE A SLAVE TO...
PATRICIA, I'M GOING UP TO MY STUDY.
...TO--WHY OF COURSE, DARRYL.
I'LL PROBABLY BE UP VERY LATE. DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME.
I UNDERSTAND, DEAR. DON'T WORK TOO HARD!
IT'S BEEN AS IF HE WAS WATCHING A TV SHOW ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE. IT DIDN'T MATTER. A SUCCESSFUL SURGEON--WITH A BEAUTIFUL ELEGANT WIFE--A HOME IN THE MOST EXPENSIVE PART OF RIVERDALE--
--AND IT DIDN'T MATTER.
HE HAD ALL OF IT--AND NOTHING FELT LIKE ANYTHING ANY MORE.
OLD? HE HAD BEEN DEAD.
HE HAD BEEN DEAD--
A SOFT HAND BRINGING GOLD AND NEED BEYOND MORNING--
--AND WAS NOW ALIVE.


THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF DR. STRANGE, IN GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY...
TEA IS PREPARED, MISS TOPAZ--IF YOU WOULD CARE FOR SOME?
YES, THANK YOU, WONG.


SARA--DR. STRANGE--YOU CALLED ME HERE?
HAVE A SEAT, TOPAZ. THERE'S NO NEED TO BE NERVOUS--BUT I THINK THE TIME HAS COME TO TALK.

I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, TOPAZ--BUT IF I'M TO HELP YOU RETRIEVE THE PART OF YOUR SOUL THAT WAS RIPPED FROM YOUR BREAST,* I NEED TO KNOW THE WHOLE STORY.
*SEE ISSUE #75.

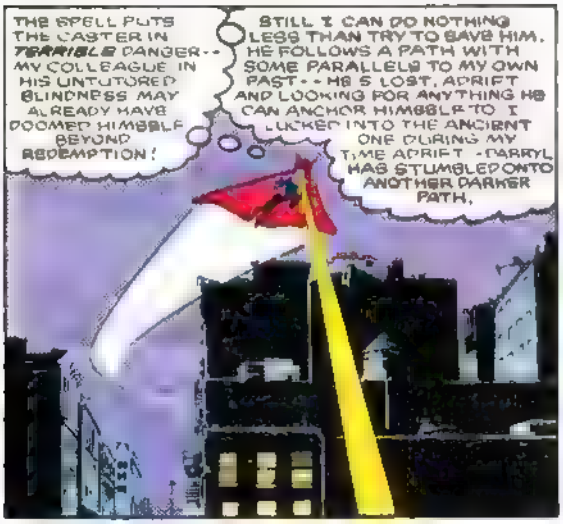

OKAY, I'LL TRY. I AM--OR WAS--AN EMPATH. THE SORCERER TABOO RAISED ME FROM CHILDHOOD--AND USED ME FOR HIS OWN ENDS. THAT ENDED WHEN HE ENCOUNTERED JACK RUSSELL, A WEREWOLF. TABOO DIED IN THAT ENCOUNTER AND JACK BECAME A FRIEND*
BUT THERE WERE POWERS THAT WERE INTERESTED IN ME--POWERS THAT FORCED ME TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE VAMPIRE DRACULA--
--AND BE THE AGENT BY WHICH HE WAS DRAGGED DOWN TO HADES!** THOSE POWERS WERE AFRAID OF MY EMPATHIC ABILITY--SAID THAT IT WOULD BECOME A DANGER TO THEM ON MY 21ST BIRTHDAY!
* WEREWOLF BY NIGHT #13-14
** TOMB OF DRACULA #62-64.
THAT WAS WHY THEY KEPT ME DOWN THERE, DR. STRANGE--AND THAT WAS WHY, WHEN YOU FREED ME--
--THEY MADE SURE THAT THE EMPATHIC PART OF MY SOUL WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF ME! ALL THAT--AND MORE--IS GONE!
WHERE I COULD FEEL THE SMALLEST PAIN, THE LIGHTEST JOY IN SOMEONE'S HEART. TAKE IT AND HEAL IT OR NURTURE IT. NOW THERE'S NOTHING!
YOU CAN STAND RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, STEPHEN--BUT THERE'S NO CONTACT AT ALL!
NOT EVEN WHEN I DO THIS--!

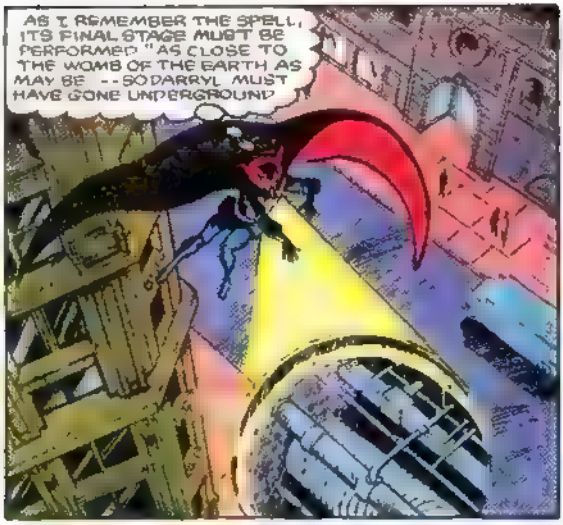
THERE'S NOTHING! I DON'T REACH YOU!
TOPAZ, I--
NOK NOK NOK
WONG, WOULD YOU ANSWER THE DOOR?
AT ONCE, MASTER.
WHO SHALL I SAY IS CALLING?
PATRICIA BERENSON, DR. STRANGE AND MY HUSBAND WERE COLLEAGUES--!
I HEARD, WONG, DARRYL BERENSON'S WIFE--HE'S THE LAST PERSON WHO WOULD WANT TO HAVE DEALINGS WITH ME EVER AGAIN!
PLEASE, TOPAZ--IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME?
OF COURSE.
DR. STRANGE--STEPHEN--I HAVEN'T TALKED TO YOU IN SO LONG AND NOW I'M--IT'S TERRIBLE OF ME--
DON'T WORRY, PATRICIA. WE SCARCELY RUN IN THE SAME CIRCLES ANYMORE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I SHOULD MAKE MYSELF--PRESENTABLE.
DARRYL HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW--ABOUT HOW YOU'D BECOME A MYSTIC OR OCCULTIST OR SOMETHING--AND NOW--!
YOU SAID "HAD BEEN". WHAT HAPPENED?
HE'S GONE, STEPHEN. DARRYL'S GONE! YOU HAVE TO HELP ME FIND HIM!
DID YOU GO TO THE POLICE?
OF COURSE--BUT THEY WERE NO HELP--AND THEY ASKED THE MOST HORRIBLE QUESTIONS--!
FORGIVE ME, PATRICIA, BUT I HAVE TO ASK SOME AS WELL--SUCH AS WHY YOU THINK IT'S A JOB FOR ME?

I CAN'T--IT'S TOO--HIS ROOM, IT'S--YOU HAVE TO SEE IT, STEPHEN! I CAN'T DESCRIBE IT!
AS SOON AS WONG BRINGS MY--OVERCOAT, I'LL RIDE BACK WITH YOU.
DARRYL TALKED ABOUT YOU QUITE A BIT, ACTUALLY, STEPHEN--LIKE "STRANGE WAS RIGHT TO GET OUT OF THE RAT-RACE--MORE POWER TO HIM!"
"AND I'LL BET STEPHEN STRANGE ISN'T ON THE PHONE TO BLOODY BLUE CROSS EVERY OTHER MINUTE!"
I'M SURE HE THOUGHT I DIDN'T LISTEN, BUT I DID.
SO YOU THINK HE--MIXED HIMSELF UP WITH THE OCCULT?
HOW COULD I HELP IT, STEPHEN? COULD I THINK ANYTHING ELSE WHEN I SAW THIS?
MOONS OF MUNNOPOR!

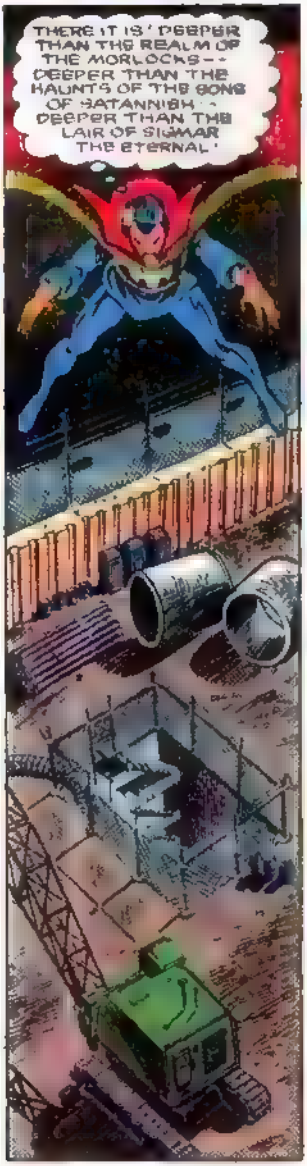
MOONS OF WHAT?
JUST AN EXPRESSION, PATRICIA. I BELIEVE YOU WERE RIGHT TO CALL ME.
AND--AND I SAW THE PENTAGRAM, JUST LIKE THEY ALWAYS TALK ABOUT. BUT AT THE CENTER--
--DEAR GOD, AT THE CENTER-- OUR WEDDING PICTURE--
--IN A FRAME THAT HAS BEGUN TO SPROUT BRANCHES AND LEAVES!
OUTSIDE OF ME, HE DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT--DABBLING IN MAGIC?
NO, HE WAS PERFECTLY NORMAL--
--I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN IT TO COME OUT THAT WAY--I'M NOT THINKING.
I'VE GOT A FAIRLY THICK SKIN BY NOW, PATRICIA. JUST TRY TO REMEMBER ANYTHING HE DID OR SAID THAT WAS ODD.
THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO BURNS WITH THE LIGHT OF TRUTH--
REALLY--I THOUGHT THE TWO OF US WERE, WELL, COMFORTABLE TOGETHER. HE WAS ALWAYS SO KIND AND GENEROUS.
--AND FIXES ITSELF ON A TINY SCRAP OF BURNT PAPER.
WAS I WRONG? HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO WRONG?
MYSTIC PASS RETRIEVES THE MEMORIES OF THE ATOMS FROM ACROSS THE ROOM--

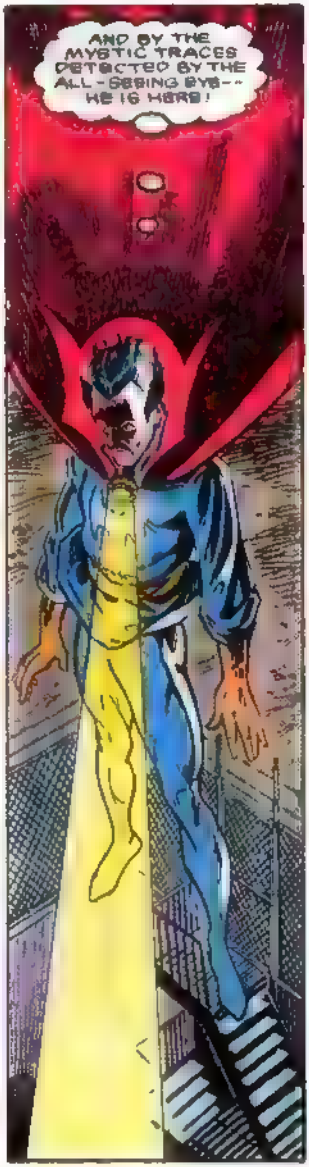
--AS IN THE LANGUAGE OF DENWAK HE ASKS THEM TO RECALL THE PAST TO HIM--
AND STREAMING BACK THEY TELL HIM ALL.
NO THE TALE THEY TELL STARTLES EVEN HIM!
NO!
YOU FOUND SOMETHING? A CLUE?
A CLUE, YES-- BUT IT'S TOO SOON TO SAY WHAT KIND I HAVE TO GO
WAIT--I'LL DRIVE YOU!
THERE'S NO NEED!-- I'LL BE BACK!
THIS SPELL IS TOO DANGEROUS TO REMAIN IN PRINT
THE PARCHMENT DISINTEGRATES AND SEEMINGS FALL AWAY--AS COAT BECOMES CLOAK OF LEVITATION--
--AND DR. STRANGE TAKES TO THE SKIES!
BY THE HOSTS OF HOGGOTH, HOW DID SOMEBODY LIKE BERENSON GET A HOLD OF THIS SPELL? I READ THE GRIMOIRE CONTAINING IT DURING MY APPRENTICESHIP, BUT EVEN I HAVE NEVER DARED CAST IT!


THE SPELL PUTS THE CASTER IN TERRIBLE DANGER-- MY COLLEAGUE IN HIS UNTUTORED BLINDNESS MAY ALREADY HAVE DOOMED HIMSELF BEYOND REDEMPTION!
STILL I CAN DO NOTHING LESS THAN TRY TO SAVE HIM. HE FOLLOWS A PATH WITH SOME PARALLELS TO MY OWN PAST-- HE'S LOST, ADRIFT AND LOOKING FOR ANYTHING HE CAN ANCHOR HIMSELF TO I LUCKED INTO THE ANCIENT ONE DURING MY TIME ADRIFT -DARRYL HAS STUMBLED ONTO ANOTHER DARKER PATH.


AS I REMEMBER THE SPELL, ITS FINAL STAGE MUST BE PERFORMED "AS CLOSE TO THE WOMB OF THE EARTH AS MAY BE --SO DARRYL MUST HAVE GONE UNDERGROUND!

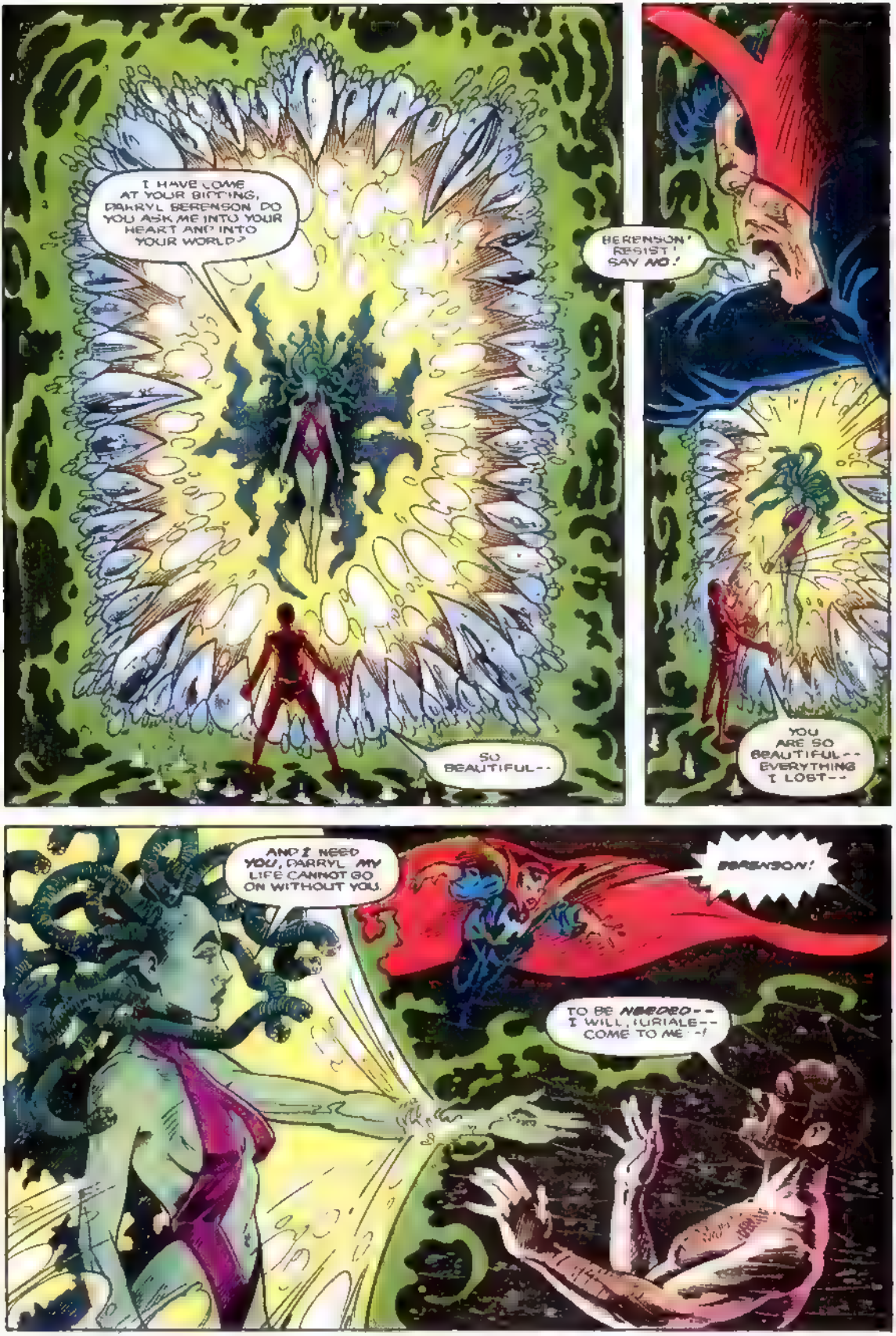
AND THE DEEPEST HOLE IN NEW YORK IS THE TUNNEL DUG TO BRING WATER IN FROM UPSTATE- AND IT IS BEING WORKED ON IN THE NORTH OF MANHATTAN, [redacted] THE HARLEM RIVER!


THERE IT IS! DEEPER THAN THE REALM OF THE MORLOCKS-- DEEPER THAN THE HAUNTS OF THE SONS OF SATANNISH - DEEPER THAN THE LAIR OF SIGMAR THE ETERNAL!

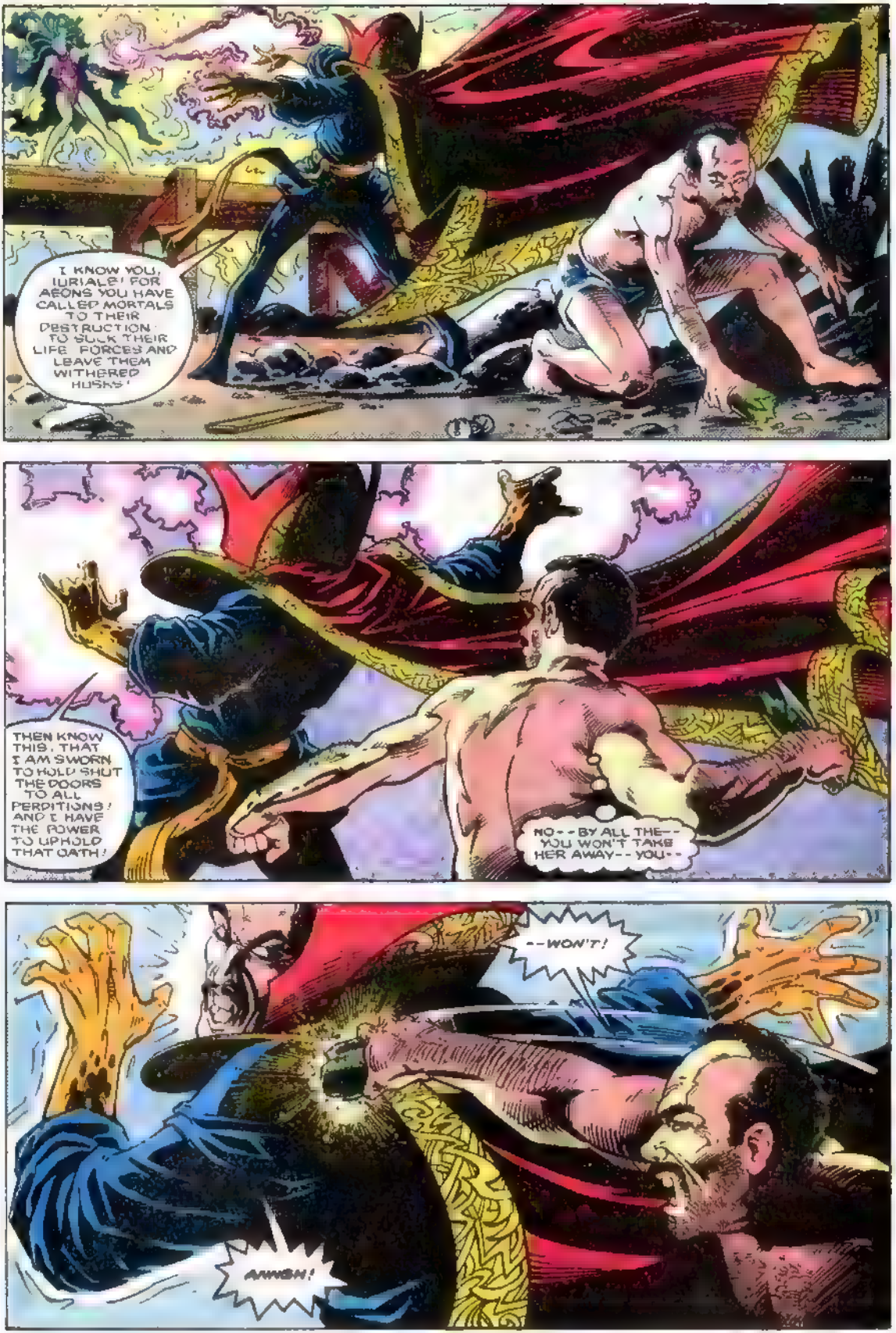

AND BY THE MYSTIC TRACES DETECTED BY THE ALL-SEEING EYE-- HE IS HERE!

HE IS HERE-- AND BY THE DIMMING OF THE LIGHT, HE HAS ALREADY STARTED THE SPELL!

THE ENERGIES INCREASE--AND BECOME MORE VILE IN QUALITY! DARRYL IS VERY CLOSE TO THE SPELL'S CONSUMMATION!
VISHANTI GRANT THAT I BE IN TIME!
I SEE HIM! BUT THE RAMPANT ENERGY--IS SLOWING MY APPROACH!
LEAY YL! ZIARITE ZELOHABB ET MEGORAMY--
--ZIEN LATEB OAMA MECHA RA METI OZIRA!
IT WORKS! IT WORKS!
BERGNSON! DARRYL! STOP!
IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, GO NO FURTHER!
OPEN! BY MY BLOOD, HAND, AND HEART, I AM OPEN!

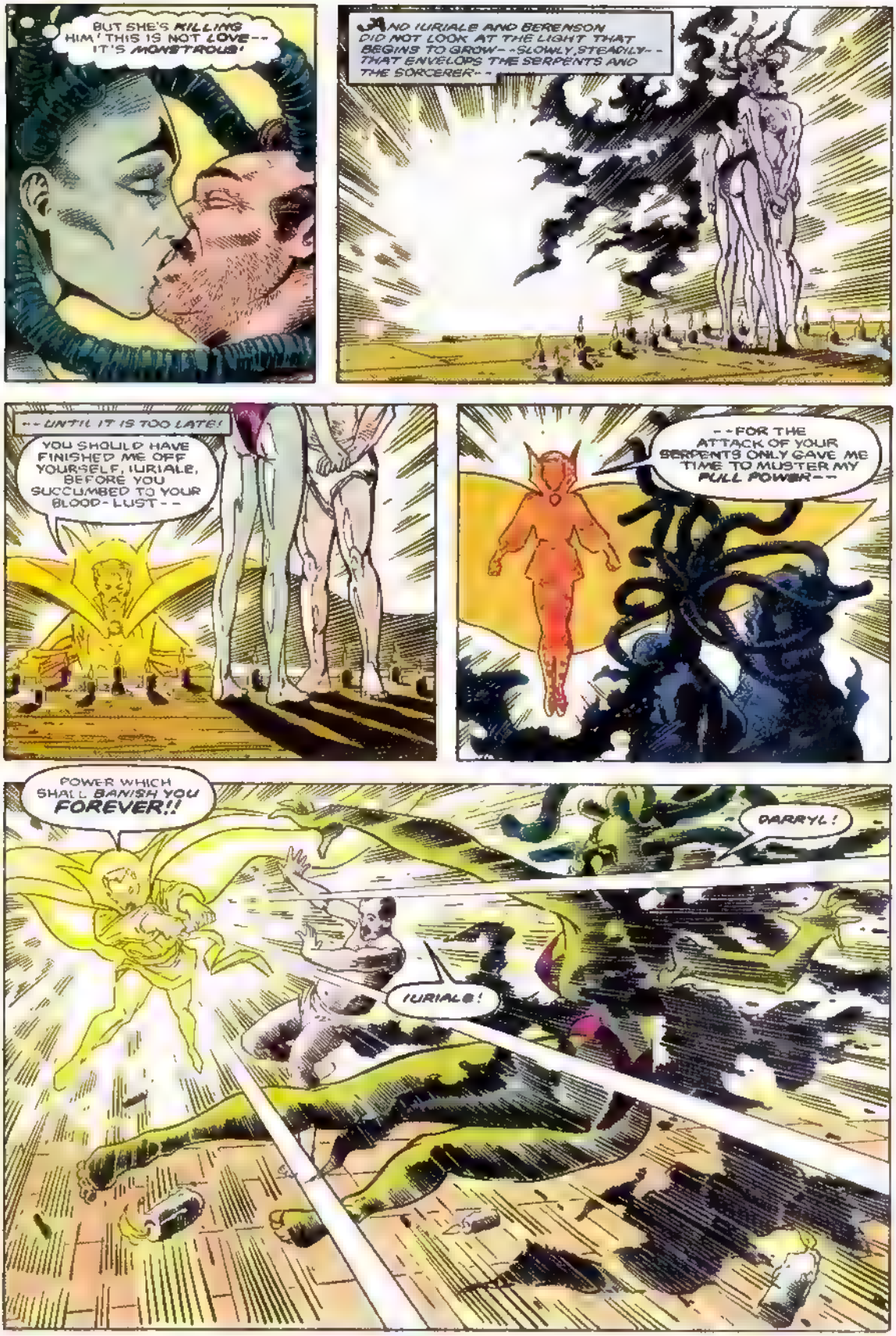

I HAVE COME AT YOUR BIDDING, DARRYL BERENSON. DO YOU ASK ME INTO YOUR HEART AND INTO YOUR WORLD?
SO BEAUTIFUL--
BERENSON! RESIST! SAY NO!
YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL-- EVERYTHING I LOST--
AND I NEED YOU, DARRYL. MY LIFE CANNOT GO ON WITHOUT YOU.
BERENSON!
TO BE NEEDED-- I WILL, JURIALE-- COME TO ME--!

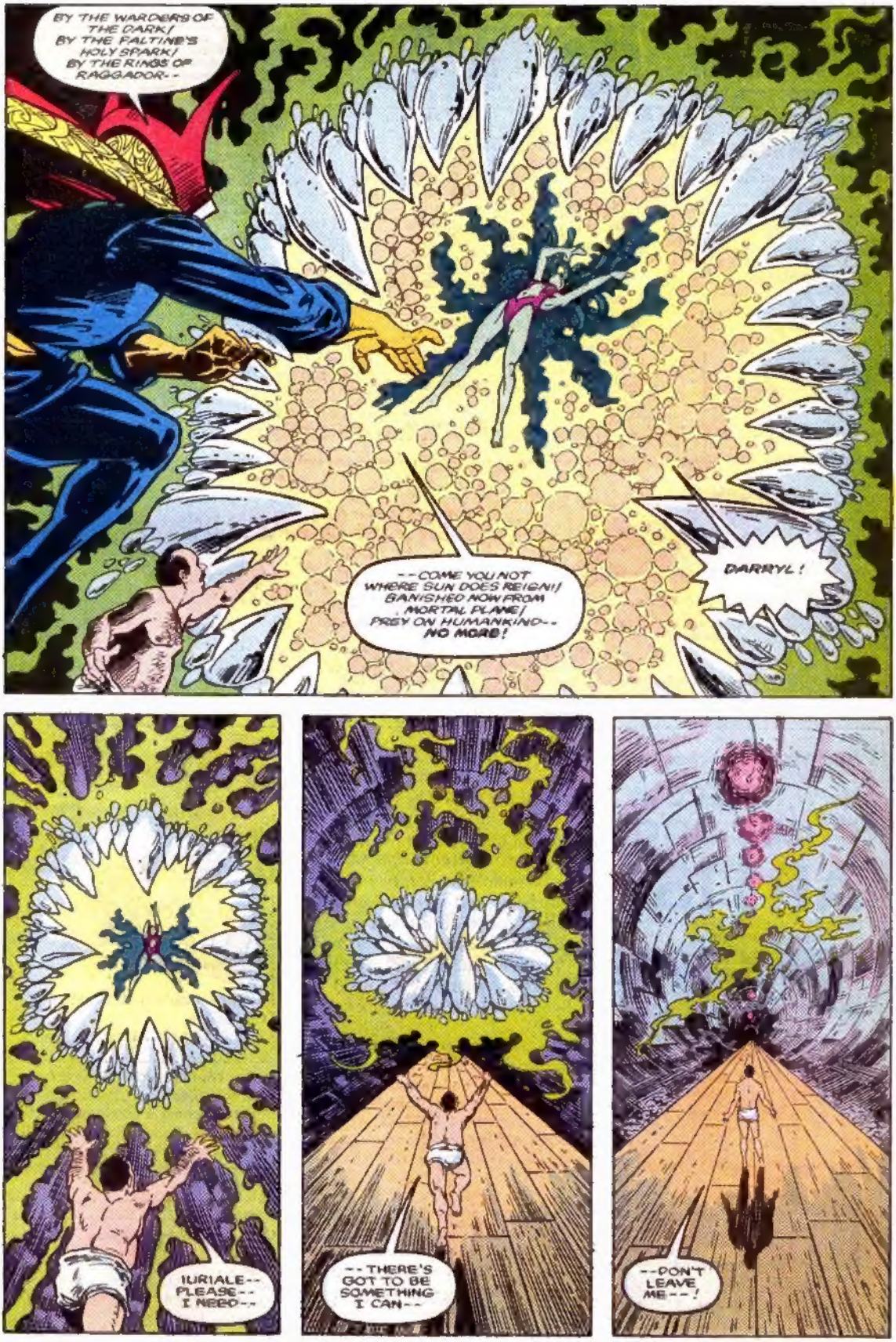
NO! THE SHIELD OF THE SERAPHIM COMES BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR PREY!
YOU ARE TOO LATE, DR STRANGE!
A MORTAL HAS ASKED ME INTO THIS WORLD--AND THE BARRIERS OF AEONS ARE DOWN!
BUT THIS PLANE HAS ONE GREAT BARRIER--THE SKILL AND THE RESOLVE OF THE SORCEROR SUPREME! AND I SHALL CAST YOU BACK, DEMONESS!
I THINK NOT, STRANGE! ON YOUR HOME GROUND, YOU WOULD BEST ME--BUT THIS IS NO LONGER YOUR HOME GROUND!
WITHIN THE FANE OF THE SPELL DARYL CAST, THIS PLACE IS UNDER MY SWAY! HERE YOU ARE THE FOREIGN WRAITH!
AND HERE YOU SHALL DEPART!


I KNOW YOU, IURIAL! FOR AEONS YOU HAVE CALLED MORTALS TO THEIR DESTRUCTION TO SUCK THEIR LIFE FORCES AND LEAVE THEM WITHERED HUSKS!
THEN KNOW THIS, THAT I AM SWORN TO HOLD SHUT THE DOORS TO ALL PERDITIONS! AND I HAVE THE POWER TO UPHOLD THAT OATH!
NO--BY ALL THE-- YOU WON'T TAKE HER AWAY--YOU--
--WON'T!
AHHGH!

TOO BAD, DOCTOR - YOU FORGOT THAT THIS MAN AND I, BOTH DESIRE THIS! AND A BOLT OF BEDEVILMENT WILL KEEP YOU FROM STOPPING US!
FOR EVER SINCE A MORTAL SORCERER GRANTED ME CORPOREALITY, I HAVE NEEDED TO BE REPLENISHED BY THAT SAME MORTALITY!
AND DARRYL SEES MY NEED-- MY MORTAL NEED!
AND SO YOU DESTROY HIM, BERENSON! SHE'LL KILL YOU!
YOU JUST DON'T SEE, DO YOU, MAGICIAN-- THAT HE'S "DEAD" ALREADY?
YOU'RE BLIND TO THE FACT THAT I GIVE HIM WHAT HE NEEDS?

YOUR WORLD LEFT HIM A GRAY AND LOVELESS HUSK-- AND HE HAS TRADED IT--
--HIS BLOOD FOR ENCHANTMENT-- --FOR EXCITEMENT--
--HIS DISMAL LIFE--
--FOR ME TAKE MY HAND, DARRYL.
I TAKE IT, IURIALE.
I CAN'T LET THIS HAPPEN--SHE'S BEWITCHED HIM! BUT MY HEAD--SPINNING-- GOING INTO SHOCK!
ALL MY TEXTS SPEAK OF HER EVIL! I MUST CAST-- SPELL--
--LOSING TOO MUCH BLOOD-- AND THE SNAKES PULLING ME DOWN--!
AND WORST OF ALL--THE LOOK OF JOY IN HIS EYES-- IN POKER-FACED DARRYL BERENSON'S EYES--!
HOW CAN I TAKE IT AWAY FROM HIM--A JOY HE CHOSE?


BUT SHE'S KILLING HIM! THIS IS NOT LOVE-- IT'S MONSTROUS!
AND IURIALE AND BERENSON DID NOT LOOK AT THE LIGHT THAT BEGINS TO GROW--SLOWLY, STEADILY-- THAT ENVELOPS THE SERPENTS AND THE SORCERER--
--UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE FINISHED ME OFF YOURSELF, IURIALE, BEFORE YOU SUCCUMBED TO YOUR BLOOD-LUST--
--FOR THE ATTACK OF YOUR SERPENTS ONLY GAVE ME TIME TO MUSTER MY FULL POWER--
POWER WHICH SHALL BANISH YOU FOREVER!!
DARRYL!
IURIALE!


BY THE WARDERS OF THE DARK! BY THE PALTINE'S HOLY SPARK! BY THE RINGS OF RAGGADOR--
--COME YOU NOT WHERE SUN DOES REIGN!! BANISHED NOW FROM MORTAL PLANE! PREY ON HUMANKIND-- NO MORE!
DARRYL!
IURIALE-- PLEASE-- I NEED--
--THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING I CAN--
--DON'T LEAVE ME--!

DARRYL--IT'S OVER. COME WITH ME AND I'LL--
YOU--YOU BLOODY--YOU TOOK HER AWAY!
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER--
THE DEVIL I WILL!! YOU TOOK EVERYTHING! YOU MONSTER!
SORENSON--STOP!
EVERYTHING--!
YOU FEEL THE PAIN, DARRYL--BUT SOON THE ENCHANTMENT WILL LIFT--
--AND I'LL BE NORMAL AGAIN. SURE. NORMAL. GRAY. DEAD--NORMAL.
SHE WAS--BEAUTIFUL. SHE NEEDED ME. SHE'D DIE WITHOUT ME--AND NOW THE GOLDEN--THE BEAUTIFUL--GONE.
YOU HAVE A WIFE WHO NEEDS YOU, AND A PRACTICE TO RETURN TO.

YES--MY LOVING, DISTANT WIFE--MY LUCRATIVE STIFLING PRACTICE--MY WHOLE STUPID LIFE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--I THOUGHT THAT YOU OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD UNDERSTAND--YOU KNOW WHAT'S IT'S LIKE--YOUR LIFE USED TO LIKE MINE--AND YOU STILL STOPPED HER!
YOU LEFT WHILE I STAYED ON--YOU KNEW IT WAS HOLLOW, NOTHING--YOU FOUND THE ENCHANTMENT.
--AND NOW IT'S GONE. NO BEAUTY. NOTHING. AND YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
COME.
IURIALE'S SPELL WAS A STRONG ONE--BUT IT'S BEEN BROKEN SOON THE MISTS WILL RISE, DARRYL.
THE POLICE WILL TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL, DARRYL. YOU WILL SLEEP--AND YOU WILL HEAL. THE WORST IS OVER, DARRYL--EVEN NOW THE SKY LIGHTENS WITH MORNING.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. NOBODY DOES. WHY SHOULD THEY?
THE COLORS RETURN AS HE FLIES SOUTH, THE SOUNDS OF THE CITY RISE. AND AS STRANGE, WEARY AND WOUNDED HIMSELF, COMES TO THE DOOR OF HIS SANCTUM.
--DAWN COMES.

PATRICIA, I'VE FOUND YOUR HUSBAND--THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY, HE'S ON HIS WAY TO--!
NO, NO, NO--!
PLEASE--DON'T WORRY ANY LONGER! I--
STEPHEN, I'M SORRY. I HATE TO HAVE TO SAY THIS--BUT THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD HAVE KNOWN. NO WAY TO KNOW.
THE POLICE, STEPHEN--THEY JUST CALLED. THEY WERE TAKING HIM TO THE HOSPITAL, JUST AS YOU INSTRUCTED--
--WHEN DR. BERENSON GRABBED ONE OF THE OFFICER'S GUNS, HE SHOT HIMSELF IN THE STOMACH. HE DIED IN PAIN.
AND THE LAST THING HE SAID WAS--"IURIALE"--!
--AND LOVE DISSOLVED INTO DARKNESS EVERYWHERE.
THE END.